

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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USMISSION USUN
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTIAGO 5902

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PGOV, PINT, CI
SUBJECT: PINOCHET'S SPEECH OPENS FLOODGATES

REFS: (A) SANTIAGO 5678, (B) STATE 160510 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT PINOCHET'S JULY 9 ANNOUNCEMENT OF A
THREE-PHASE PLAN AND ROUGH TIMETABLE FOR PUTTING INTO EFFECT
CHILE'S NEW INSTITUTIONALISM HAS TRIGGERED AN OUTBURST OF PENT-UP
COMMENTARY. ON THE BASIS OF FIRST REACTIONS IT APPEARS
INCREASINGLY UNLIKELY THAT THE SPECIFIC PROGRAM PINOCHET
ENVISIONED WILL EVER COME INTO EFFECT. CRITICISM OF BOTH PLAN
AND TIMING HAVE COME NOT ONLY FROM PREDICTABLE OPPOSITION ELEMENTS
BUT ALSO FROM WITHIN THE MILITARY AND FROM PRO-JUNTA CIVILIANS.
PINOCHET CAUGHT EVERYONE BY SURPRISE, LEADING TO SOME INITIAL
FLAILING ABOUT, INSTINCTIVE POSTURING, AND DIVERGENCE BETWEEN
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PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMENTS. HOWEVER, VIRTUALLY EVERYONE AGREES
(SOME PRIVATELY) THAT OPENING DEBATE ON THIS SUBJECT IS A MAJOR,
POSITIVE EVENT. GOC OFFICIALS ARE PLEASED WITH THE USG'S PROMPT
AND PUBLIC RECOGNITION OF THEIR MOVE. AT FIRST, THE US STATEMENT
WAS PLAYED UP ON LOCAL MEDIA. THEN, THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED THIS
LOOKED LIKE A RESPONSE TO PRESSURE AND COOLED IT. END SUMMARY.

2. PUBLIC REACTION TO THE SPEECH HAS BEEN PLENTIFUL, BEGINNING (AND ENCOURAGED) WITH JUNTA MEMBER AND AIR FORCE CINC LEIGH'S PUERTO MONTT STATEMENT THAT THE JUNTA WOULD SUBJECT THE PRESIDENT'S "USEFUL SUGGESTIONS" TO "EXHAUSTIVE SCRUTINY" (REF A, PARA 7). FOLLOWING IS THE FLAVOR FROM VARIOUS SECTORS:

3. GOC CIVILIAN SUPPORTERS. THE CIVILIAN "MOMIOS" (CONSERVATIVES) WERE DIVIDED. TWO CIVILIANS WHO LIKELY HELPED DRAFT THE SPEECH CAME ON HARD AND STRONG. CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM COMMITTEE PRESIDENT AND COUNCIL OF STATE MEMBER ENRIQUE ORTUZAR TOLD THE PRESS ON JULY 12 THAT THE PRESIDENT'S THREE-STAGE PLAN WOULD GUARANTEE THE "MAXIMUM INTEGRATION OF ALL SECTORS" IN CHILE. JAIME GUZMAN CALLED THE SPEECH "TRANSCENDENTAL" AND SAID THAT THE PINOCHET PLAN HAD CLEARLY DEFINED OBJECTIVES, WHICH SHOULD ANSWER CRITICS' ARGUMENTS THAT IT LACKED SUBSTANCE. ANOTHER PINOCHET SUPPORTER, HUGO ROSENDE, STATED THAT THE NEW ORDER SHOULD COME AS NO SURPRISE AND FITS INTO THE OVERALL SCHEME OF STEPS TAKEN SINCE 1973 TO "RESTORE INSTITUTIONAL NORMALCY." TRADITIONALIST VALPARAISO BISHOP EMILIO TAGLE PRAISED IT AS A "GREAT PATRIOTIC GESTURE."

4. OTHER GOC SUPPORTERS WERE NOT SO SURE. PABLO RODRIGUEZ, WHO FOUNDED THE FASCIST "PATRIA Y LIBERTAD," COMPLAINED THAT THE PRESIDENTIAL ANNOUNCEMENT DID NOT DEFINE THE FUTURE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES. BOTH HE AND LABOR LEADER FEDERICO MUJICA, AN ON-AGAIN OFF-AGAIN GOC BACKER, CONSIDERED THE TIMETABLES TOO DISTANT AND URGED THAT THEY BE SHORTENED. EX-CHILEAN VICE

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PRESIDENT PEDRO ENRIQUE ALFONSO CALLED FOR RAPID CHANGES "TO IMPROVE CHILE'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE" AND FOR INCREASED RESPONSIBILITY TO BE GIVEN TO THE COUNCIL OF STATE IN ALL POLITICAL MATTERS.

5. EX-NATIONALIST PARTY SENATOR VICENTE GARCIA GARENZA TOOK THE OTHER SIDE HOWEVER. HE THOUGHT THE SCHEDULE WAS A BIT RUSHED AND HOPED THE TIME WOULD BE USED TO DEVELOP AN ELITIST STRUCTURE WHICH COULD HOLD CHILE TOGETHER FOR AT LEAST 30-40 YEARS. SOME BUSINESSMEN REPORTEDLY SHARE THIS VIEW, EQUATING IT TO WHAT THEY SEE AS A RECKLESS EXPERIMENT IN SPAIN TODAY.

6. THE PRESS. AS EXPECTED, GOC-OWNED "EL CRONISTA" HAS CARRIED DAILY HEADLINES ON THE SPEECH, BUT NO EDITORIALS. IT HAS, HOWEVER, "SAMPLED" PUBLIC OPINION AND COME UP WITH SUCH VIEWS FROM THE MAN ON THE STREET AS: "THE ANNOUNCEMENT SCARES ME -- WE HAVE BEEN SO PEACEFUL I HOPE IT TAKES A LONG TIME ... QH NEED PINOCHET IN THE PRESIDENCY." "CRONISTA" ALSO QUOTED GOC SOURCES AS SAYING THAT "AMBITIOUS EGOTISTS" COULD SLOW UP THE PROGRAMMED RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE. "EL MERCURIO" QUERIED 32 CIVILIANS, MOST CONSERVATIVE AND/OR PRO-GOC. IT FOUND EVEN AMONG THIS SAMPLE AN EAGERNESS TO ACCELERATE THE TIMETABLE AND A SIZEABLE NUMBER QUESTIONING THE PROPOSED STRUCTURE OF THE LEGISLATURE.

7. "EL MERCURIO," IN A FIRST BLUSH EDITORIAL JULY 10, HAD WARM WORDS FOR THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF A TIMETABLE, BUT NOTED THAT THE TIME SPAN FROM THE SEPTEMBER 11, 1973 COUP TO THE EXPIRATION OF THE FIRST PRESIDENTIAL TERM -- 1991, UNDER THE PLAN -- WILL BE NEARLY A GENERATION, AND POINTEDLY SPECULATED THAT PINOCHET HAD DIRECTED HIS SPEECH TO THE YOUTH FOR THAT REASON.

8. WEEKLY MAGAZINES, INDEPENDENT "QUE PASA" AND CONSERVATIVE "ERCILLA," ALSO DISCUSSED THE PINOCHET PLAN. "ERCILLA" ASSERTED THAT "IT IS UNDERSTOOD" THAT POLITICAL PARTIES WILL HAVE A ROLE, THOUGH MUCH MORE LIMITED THAN IN THE PAST, WHILE THE CONSERVATIVE "QUE PASA" NOTED THAT THE PLAN DOES NOT PROVIDE FOR ANY INCREASE IN CITIZEN PARTICIPATION BETWEEN NOW AND 1980 AND THAT THE FRAME-
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WORK IS GENERAL IN NATURE, SUBJECT TO CHANGES AND ADJUSTMENTS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SANTIAGO 5902

9. THE OFFICIALLY BANNED CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDC) RELEASED A STATEMENT AIMED AT THE INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE. IT MENTIONED ALMOST AS AN ASIDE THAT IT WAS GOOD TO HAVE A PLAN BUT DECLARED THAT THE PINOCHET TIMETABLE DID NOT AGREE WITH "THE URGENT DESIRES OF THE MAJORITY OF CHILEANS." THE STATEMENT ARGUES THAT THE GOC PLAN EXTENDS AUTHORITARIAN RULE UNTIL 1991 AND MAKES NO ALLOWANCES FOR DEBATE ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES, "SUCH AS THE LIFTING OF THE EMERGENCY POWERS, THE END TO REPRESSION, THE ELIMINATION OF INTELLECTUAL AND MEDIA CENSORSHIP, AND END TO MILITARY INTERVENTION IN THE UNIVERSITIES, FREE DETERMINATION AND ELECTIONS IN ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS LABOR, AND THE RESTORATION OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS." THE STATEMENT CONTENDS THAT ONLY THE PEOPLE CAN APPROVE A NEW CONSTITUTION, THE SHAPE AND FORM THAT THEIR GOVERNMENT IS TO HAVE AND THE TIMETABLES INVOLVED.

10. SO FAR THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS HELD ITS FIRE. THE LEFT HAS
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YET TO DEFINE A POSITION. ITS LIKELY GOAL WILL BE TO PICK
THE PLAN'S DETAILS APART.

11. BUT THE PUBLIC PLAY IS LESS THAN HALF THE STORY. OTHER REPORTING HAS TOUCHED UPON REACTIONS WITHIN THE MILITARY. ALSO, FOREIGN MINISTER(AND NAVY ADMIRAL) CARVAJAL TOLD THE CHARGE JULY 13 THAT THE TIMETABLE MIGHT BE ACCELERATED. HE IS VIEWED AS A PINOCHET MAN AND GENERALLY A HARDLINER WHEN IT COME TO THE MARXIST THREAT.

12. JAIME GUZMAN TOLD THE CHARGE THAT THE PROGRAM WAS FLEXIBLE -- AND HE DID SO IN THE PRESENCE OF A FIERY PDC LEADER. THE PDCER, IN TURN, QUESTIONED HIS PARTY'S WISDOM IN LAMBASTING THE WHOLE INITIATIVE PUBLICLY. HE SAID PDCERS WERE VERY ENCOURAGED BY THIS NEW OPENING AND HOPED TO ENGAGE IN POSITIVE DIALOGUE WITH GOC SUPPORTERS. THIS KIND OF LOVEFEST HAS BEEN RARE IN POST-COUP CHILE.

13. GOC OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN MOST PLEASED WITH THE USG'S ANNOUNCEMENT. THE MEDIA, PROBABLY WITH OFFICIAL PRODDING, BECAME UNDULY EFFUSIVE. "EL MERCURIO" JULY 12 AND 13 SPORTED THE HEADLINES, "US PRAISES PRESIDENT'S REMARKS" AND "EMBASSY REITERATES US SATISFACTION." THE PRESS HIGHLIGHTED THE POSITIVE TONE OF THE CARVAJAL/BOYATT MEETING. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ISSUED A STATEMENT ON THE SAME DAY THAT THE GOVERNMENTS OF FRANCE AND BELGIUM HAD, THROUGH OFFICIAL CHANNELS, EXPRESSED GREAT SATISFACTION WITH THE PINOCHET SPEECH, CALLING IT ON OF "GREAT IMPORTANCE."

14. THE GOC THEN FOUND ITSELF IN THE AWKWARD POSITION OF SEEMING TO HAVE MOVED TO PLACATE INTERNATIONAL OPINION. TO DISPEL THAT NOTION AN UNIDENTIFIED HIGH-LEVEL GOVERNMENT SOURCE (WE SUSPECT GENERAL HERNAN BEJARE'S OFFICE) TOLD THE PRESS ON JULY 14 THAT THE PRESIDENTIAL ANNOUNCEMENT REPRESENTED A

"SOVEREIGN MANDATE AND A SPONTANEOUS GESTURE" ON THE PART OF PINOCHET
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AND THAT, "IN NO WAY WAS MADE BECAUSE OF EXTERNAL PRESSURES OR TO GET INTO A CERTAIN COUNTRY'S GOOD GRACES." THE SOURCE ALSO WARNED THAT "ADVERSE FACTORS, SUCH AS INTERNAL POLITICAL AGITATION AND ATTACKS" COULD PROLONG THE GOC'S TIMETABLE. LASTLY, HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE USG RESPONSE AND STATED THAT IT WAS PLEASED THAT "THE SOUND OBJECTIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN INTERPRETED WELL."

15. ANOTHER SPINOFF APPEARED IN THE FORM OF QUESTIONS FROM SOME CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS ABOUT THE TIMING AND SCOPE OF THE US REACTION: WERE WE ENDORSING THE PLAN AND TIMETABLE? A CLOSE READING OF THE USG POSITION APPEARED TO CLARIFY THEIR MISPERCEPTIONS.

16. COMMENT: WE DRAW THE FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS FROM THE FOREGOING:

-- MOST OF THE INTERNAL MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OPINION TO DATE INDICATES THAT THE TIMETABLE AND INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE WHICH COMES TO PASS WILL MORE CLOSELY RESEMBLE THE "NAIVE" CLASSIC LIBERAL STATE THAN PINOCHET'S CURRENT PRESCRIPTIONS;

-- HARDLINERS WILL BE TEMPTED TO CUT OFF DEBATE SHOULD COMMENTARY BECOME RAMBUNCTIOUS (INDEED THE GOC DID CANCEL ONE TV PANEL IN THE NAME OF THE POLITICAL RECESS), BUT THEY WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO DO SO UNLESS IT REALLY GETS OUT OF HAND (AS DEMONSTRATED BY "MERCURIO'S" OPINION POLL JULY 17);

-- OPPOSITION ELEMENTS -- THOSE JOB HUNGRY POLITICIANS AMONG THEM -- WILL BE TEMPTED TO ACT AS IF 1973 NEVER OCCURRED, BUT WE JUDGE THEY WILL HAVE SENSE ENOUGH TO TEMPER THEIR INSTINCTS WITH CURRENT REALITIES; AND,

-- A SIGNIFICANT NEW STAGE IN THIS GOVERNMENT'S RULE HAS NOW BEGUN.
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